

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1040

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, UR, CZ
SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV

1. SOVIET DEFMIN DMITRI USTINOV MADE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA
APRIL 15-20 AT THE INVITATION OF CSSR DEFMIN MARTIN DZUR.
USTINOV WAS ACCOMPANIED BY (ORDER AS LISTED IN OFFICIAL FINAL
STATEMENT) ARMY GENERAL ELEKSEI YEPISHEV, CPSU CC MEMBER AND CHIEF
OF MAIN POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOVIET ARMY AND NAVY; DEPUTY
DEFMIN CHIEF MARSHAL OF THE SOVIET UNION KIRILL MOSKALENKO;
AND A SIZEABLE RETINUE.

2. DURING THE VISIT GOC ROLLED OUT THE RED CARPET. USTINOV WAS
RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT HUSAK, IN THE PRESENCE OF MOST OF THE MEMBERS
OF THE PARTY PRESIDUM, AND AWARDED THE CZECHOSLOVAK ORDER OF
THE WHITE LION, 1ST CLASS, FOR HIS SERVICES IN "DEEPENING THE
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COMBAT FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE CSPA AND THE SOVIET ARMY AND FOR
CONSOLIDATING THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE CZECHOSLOVAK AND SOVIET
PEOPLES." HUSAK AND MUCH OF THE LEADERSHIP ALSO ATTENDED A
RECEPTION GIVEN BY USTINOV AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY.

3. DURING THEIR VISIT THE SOVIETS VISITED FACTORIES PRODUCING
MILITARY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING AERO VODOCHODY AND SKODA (PILSEN),

AND MILITARY UNITS. THEME OF THE VISITS WAS CLOSE COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES, WITH THE SOVIETS EMPHASIZING THEIR ROLE IN LIBERATING CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM THE NAZIS.

4. COMMENT: THE VISIT APPEARED TO BE A ROUTINE FAMILIARIZATION OF THE NEW SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER WITH A WARSAW PACT ALLY AND WITH SOVIET FORCES STATIONED HERE. SOME OF OUR NATO COLLEAGUES SPECULATE THAT THE REAL FOCUS OF THE VISIT WAS ON CZECHOSLOVAK PRODUCTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR THIRD WORLD CUSTOMERS. THE ONLY CORROBORATION FOR THIS, HOWEVER, IS THE SEVERAL FACTORIES VISITED BY USTINOV AND HIS OWN DEFENSE PRODUCTION BACKGROUND.

5. DATT AND ARMA WERE ABLE TO OBSERVE USTINOV AND RETINUE CLOSELY AT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE CEREMONIES AND WERE ESPECIALLY STRUCK BY THE AGED APPEARANCE OF THE SENIOR OFFICIALS. USTINOV RESPONDED CORDIALLY TO OUR ATTACHES' GREETINGS TO HIM AS HE SHOOK THEIR HANDS IN RECEIVING LINE.
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 25-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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